

Monmouth House
East Franklin Street and Melrose Avenue
Natchez
Adams County
Mississippi

HABS No. MS-194

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONMOUTH HOUSE

HABS No. MS-194

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Location: East Franklin Street and Melrose Avenue, Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi.

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Ronald B. Riches, 1246 Norman Place, Los Angeles, California 90049.

Present Use: Principal use, bed and breakfast, private dwelling quarters retained by Mr. and Mrs. Riches.

Significance: Monmouth is a notable example of Federal and Greek Revival architecture which dominated the grand, high style dwellings of antebellum Natchez. From 1826 until 1858 Monmouth was the home of John Anthony Quitman, an important national political figure and hero of the Mexican War.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: 1820, 1853.
2. Architect: James McClure, architect of the 1853 remodeling.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

1814 Lewis Evans and Sarah Evans his wife to Jonathan Thompson Consideration \$16,000 Conveys: "All that certain tract or parcel of land and plantation situated, lying and being in and adjacent to the said city of Natchez and being the same city of Natchez and being the same tract or parcel of land and plantation whereon the said Lewis now resides containing one hundred and seventy six acres and six hundredths of an acre of land English measure, more or less the same being part of two several tracts of land whereof one was conveyed to the said Lewis Evans by Jeremiah Routh and the other by Robert Cochran and of which one tract of nine acres and eighty seven hundredths of an acre or thereabouts hath been sold and conveyed by the said Lewis Evans to John Henderson and one other tract of ten acres or thereabouts hath been sold and conveyed by the said Lewis Evans to Philip Brill saving and reserving thereout seventeen acres of land in two lots along the Washington Road between Williamstown so called and the Forks of the Road whereof a part hath been sold and conveyed to the said Lewis Evans and part thereof remains unsold."

1817 Jonathan Thompson to John Hankinson. Consideration \$3000 Conveys: "15 acres" as above described but does not cite "known as Monmouth."

- 1825 John Henderson, et als. Trustees to Calvin Smith on a defaulted Deed of Trust by John Hankinson
Consideration: \$10,000 Conveys: same as above but cites "the tract known as Monmouth."
- 1826 Calvin Smith and wife Priscilla Smith to John A. Quitman Conseration \$12,000 - Conveys: "All that certain lot or piece of land situate in the said county of Adams and adjacent to the city of Natchez containing fifteen acres and eight five hundredths of an acre as surveyed by Charles Defrance and bounded as follows Beginning at Jonathan Thompsons late south east corner and running thence south 89° 14' East six chains and sixty seven lins to a hickory: Thence North 35 minutes west twenty two chains and eighty five links to a post at George Smith's line and a certain lot belonging to the East of _____ Carr (Deceased) to a post at the south corner thereof. Thence south thirty five minutes east twenty four chains and seventy links along James Morris and Jonathan Thompson's lines to the place of beginning, and also one other certain lot or parcel of land situate in the said city of Natchez being part of a lot purchased by Lewis Evans by the aforesaid Jonathan Thompson. Beginning at the southeast corner thereof which is also the northeast corner of Job Routh's land and is on the line of James Moore and running thence North thirty five minutes west twenty two chains forty links along said Moore's line to the southeast corner of the land of the late William Crawford. Thence along the back line of said Crawford's land North 83° 7' west to the south west corner thereof; Thence twenty three chains and thirty eight links to the line of Job Routh's land. Thence along his lines South 89° 14' East six chains and fifty one links to the place of beginning containing fiteen acres more or less, it being the same land sold and conveyed by Jonathan Thompson and wife to the late John Hankinson and said two tracts or lots of land together being the late residence of said Hankinson and known by the name of Monmouth, purchased by the said Calvin Smith from John Henderson, Alexander Henderson & Thomas Henderson."
- 1919 Misses Eva C. and Alice Quitman Lovell (granddaughters of General John A. Quitman) to W. W. Perry
Consideration \$20,000 Conveys: "All that certain tract, or parcel of land lying, being and situate in the County of Adams and State of Mississippi, partly within and partly without the corporate limits of the city of Natchez and called and known as Monmouth, containing about 70 acres, more or less, and being the

same property that was owned and occupied for many years by the late General John A. Quitman as his home - excepting certain small lots sold off therefrom by the late Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan after the death of the said General Quitman who was her father, said lots being hereinafter referred to, and also excepting one small lot sold therefrom by us, hereinafter mentioned; being also the same acquired by the said Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan by inheritance from her said father as one of his six children, he having died intestate, and by acquisition of the other undivided five sixths therefrom by the following deeds: from F. Henry Quitman, son of said General Quitman, to Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan, Mrs. Frederika Q. Ogden one Miss Eliza T. Quitman, all daughters of said General Quitman, dated August 9th, 1865, recorded in Book N.N. page 480 of the Records of Deeds of said Adams County; from Mrs. Frederika Q. Ogden, Mrs. Antonia Q. Lovell, William S. Lovell, Eva C. Lovell, and Alice Q. Lovell, to Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan, deed dated December 10th, 1890 recorded in Book 3-G page 605 of said Deed Records - the interest conveyed by us in said last mentioned deed being an undivided one sixth interest devised to us by our deceased mother, Mrs. Louisa W. Lovell, who was a daughter of said General Quitman; and the interest conveyed by the said William S. Lovell by said last mentioned deed being all the interest therein that he had belonged to Mrs. Eliza T. Routh, nee' Quitman, daughter of said General Quitman, by inheritance from her said father and by the deed from F. Henry Quitman above mentioned which said interest was acquired by said William S. Lovell under a deed in trust from the said Mrs. Eliza T. Routh and her husband Stephen M. Routh to Frances E. Ogden and wife Frederika Q. Ogden, as trustees, dated June 25th 1867, recorded in Book O.O. page 622, of said Deed Records and by a deed from Frederika Q. Ogden, surviving trustee, and said Stephen M. Routh to said William S. Lovell, dated May 9, 1870, and recorded in Book H.H. page 330 of the Deed Records of Warren County, Mississippi and in Book F-4 page 508, of the Deed Records of said Adams County, Mississippi, said Monmouth having been devised to us by the said Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan by her will, duly probated in said Adams County October 30th, 1914, and recorded in Will Book 6 page 193 et seq. of the Registry of Wills of said County. Said Monmouth being composed of sundry tracts of land sold and conveyed to the said General Quitman by the followjg Deeds to wit: From Calvin Smith and wife, dated March 11th, 1826, recorded in Book P. page 61 of said deed records of Adams County, from James C. Williams, Admr. of Jonathan Thompson,

deed dated March 16th, 1827 recorded in Book P page 413 of said Deed Records from Wm. N. Mercer and Ayres P. Merrill, Executors of James Moore, dated February 7th, 1830, recorded in Book U page 509 of said Deed Records from Zalmona Parker and wife deed dated Dec. 1, 1829 recorded in Book U page 510 of said records from Ayres P. Merrill, Admr. of Robert Moore deed dated February 10, 1834 recorded in Book V page 129 of said Deed Records, from Job. W. Alley and wife deed dated January 1, 1933, recorded in Book T page 548 of said Deed Records from R.N. Wood and wife dated August 21, 1938 recorded in Book A.A. page 279 of said Deed Records: From Robert N. Wood and wife to said General Quitman and John Ker deed dated August 21, 1838, recorded in Book A.A. page 274, of said Deed Records; and from W. C. Coffin, et als, Commissioners deed dated May 17th, 1852 recorded in Book II page 205 of said Deed Records: Excepting however the following lots and tracts sold off from said several tracts by the following conveyance to wit from said John A. Quitman and wife to John O'Ferrall, deed dated May 27th 1846 recorded in Book F.F. page 379 from John A. Quitman to Dr. John Ker, partition deed made in November 1842, dividing not being of record: From Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan to Vilola Brannick deed dated April 15, 1903, recorded in Book 3-X, page 155, of said Deed Records: From Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan to Mary Eliza Carr, deed dated May 7, 1912, recorded in Book 4-B page 942, of said Deed Records: From Mrs. Rosalie Q. Duncan to Corinna Scott, deed dated June 21, 1912, recorded in Book 4-D page 798 of said Deed Records: And from ourselves Eva C. and Alice Q. Lovell to Charles Vessels, deed dated March 9, 1917, recorded in Book F-4 page 89, of the said Deed Records. Special reference is here made to all the deeds and instruments hereinabove recited for greater certainty of descriptions for deraignment of title.

1922 Miss Lottie Perry evidently heir of W.W. Perry to Mrs. Annie G. Gwin Consideration \$10,000 Conveys: see the deed preceding.

4. Original plans and construction: The plan is based on the traditional double-pile arrangement with the staircase located to the side, leaving the hall clear. Flanking the hall to the east is a set of parlors joined by a wide elliptical arched opening. The formal and family dining rooms are to the west of the entrance hall. Upstairs there is a hallway flanked by two bedrooms on each side.
5. Alterations and additions: Circa 1853 General J. A. Quitman added the rear gallery and wing according to the plans of James McClure, an architect from Cincinnati. The facade was remodeled

in the same style as the rear of the house. The new portico and full entablature replaced an earlier portico or pavillion. Circa 1918 bathrooms were installed on each end of the rear gallery as a part of the complete restoration undertaken by Mrs. Hubert Barnum.

B. Historical Context:

Monmouth was the home of John Anthony Quitman from 1826 until his death in 1858. Quitman moved to Natchez from Ohio and soon established himself as a successful attorney. In 1827 he was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives and the following year was unanimously elected Chancellor of the State. In 1834 Quitman was elected to the State Senate where he was named its President. During this period he operated sugar and cotton plantations, served as director of the Planter's Bank, trustee of Jefferson College and Natchez Academy, and president of local railroad company. From 1846 to 1847 Quitman served in the Mexican War and was appointed civil and military governor of Mexico City by General Scott. In 1849 he was elected to Congress. In 1848 and again in 1856 Quitman was a serious contender for the Democratic Vice-Presidential nomination. He died in 1858.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Monmouth is an excellent example of a monumental Greek Revival dwelling with delicate, Federal interiors. It contains some of its original furnishings.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall description: The rear gallery and wing have been added to the original two-story square. The main facade numbers 5 bays.
2. Foundation: Brick.
3. Walls: The brick building is of common bond. The northeast and northwest elevations have been stuccoed and scored.
4. Structural systems: The windows within the brick walls are topped by flat arches and key stones. Semi-circular arches span the doorways.
5. Portico, galleries: A giant, three bay portico supported by four square columns at the front is constructed of stuccoed brick. The columns support a full entablature and pediment. The rear, L-shaped gallery is supported by eight giant piers.

6. Chimneys: Four chimneys are placed symmetrically on the southeast and northwest elevations.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main facade features identical doorways on the first and second floors. Each is topped by a semi-circular transom and surrounded by a wide architrave capped by a key stone.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The windows are double hung with twelve over twelve glazing. They are topped by flat arches with key stones. Some of the original shutters remain.
8. Roof: Although the hipped roof has been covered with tile, some of the original 1820 wood shingles remain. The upper portion of the classical entablature of the portico becomes the cornice for the remaining portions of the main facade. The side and rear elevations retain the Federal dentil cornices.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Both floors are laid out in the traditional double pile with the staircase placed to the side of the central hallway. To the southeast are the twin parlors and to the northwest are the family and formal dining rooms. Each of these rooms has a corresponding bed chamber above. Bathrooms, added circa 1920, were placed in the end bays of the rear gallery.
2. Stairways: The stairway, offset in the rear of the central hallway, curves in a graceful quarter-turn with winders to the second floor. The handrail begins at a cluster of slender, oval-sectioned balusters on the curtail step, and is supported in its ascent by a subsequent of two balusters to a tread.
3. Flooring: Wood.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plaster (some covered with paper). The ceilings are also plaster and occasionally include plaster medallions.
5. Doorways and doors: The doorway connecting the front and rear parlors is spanned by an elliptical fan transom with radiating and swag muntins. Other interior doorways are flanked by pilasters supporting a full entablature.
6. Decorative features: Additional architectural detail includes crown and picture moldings, chair rails, black-painted baseboards, paneling beneath windows and within window and door casings, corner cupboards and Greek Revival marble mantels.
7. Hardware: Some of the original rim locks remain in place.

D. Site:

1. General setting: Monmouth is set within a park-like landscape of 38 acres.
2. Outbuildings: There remains a two-story former servants quarters and kitchen featuring an elliptical arcade on the first level.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Jackson, Mississippi; "Monmouth" picture and subject files. Quitman (John A.) Papers.

Office of the Chancery Clerk, Adams County Courthouse, Natchez, Mississippi: Deed Book O, pp. 169-170; Deed Book P, pp. 61-63; Will Book 6, p. 193.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Cooper, J. Sley. Antebellum Houses of Natchez. Natchez: Southern Historical Publications, Inc., 1970, pp. 104-105.

Duncan, Osalie Q. "Life of General John A. Quitman." Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, IV (1901), pp. 415-424.

"Quitman, John A." Dictionary of American Biography, 1935.

Rowland, Dunbar, ed. Mississippi. 3 vol. Atlanta: Southern Historical Publications Association, 1907. III: "Quitman, John A.," pp. 486-492; "Quitman's Administration."

The Daily Democrat (Natchez, Mississippi). May 10, 1896, p. 2, column 2.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project coordinated by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Elbert R. Hilliard, Director. Data compiled by William C. Allen, Architectural Historian, November 1974. Edited by Marion K. Schlefer, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., 1984.